



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



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## **MISSOURI SENATE ADVANCES BILLS OFFERING ASSISTANCE TO TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS AND SMALL BUSINESSES**

This week the Missouri Senate gave final approval and sent to the House of Representatives, legislation that I've sponsored aimed at simplifying motor vehicle registration for tax-exempt organizations.

Under Senate Bill 1048, churches, charitable groups and tax-exempt organizations would need only to bring proof of tax-exempt status when renewing a motor vehicle registration.

As I've discussed in previous columns, currently when a tax-exempt organization renews motor vehicle license registration, a special trip has to be made to the county assessor's to certify the center's tax-exempt status.

I believe that extra step is just a waste of time for all involved.

The changes made under SB 1048 are just common sense, and I am pleased it is moving quickly through the legislative process.

In other business, the Senate gave first-round approval to Senate Bill 718, which is meant to make it less cumbersome to operate a small business.

This bill would create the Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board which would conduct hearings and solicit input from small businesses regarding enforcement by regulatory state agencies.

The board would be made up of two members appointed by the governor, one member appointed by the lieutenant governor, one member who is chair of the minority business advocacy commission, two members appointed by the House of Representatives, two members appointed by the Senate, one member appointed by speaker of the House and one member appointed by the president pro tem of the Senate.

Colorado and North Dakota have already passed similar legislation into law.

The sheer volume of new rules and regulations can be oppressive for small businesses. According to Missouri Secretary of State's office there have been 13,972 rules filed since 1996. There were 2,442 new rules filed in 2002 alone.

Right now small businesses have nowhere to turn to for assistance.

SB 718 is identical to legislation passed during 2003 Legislative Session, and vetoed by Gov. Bob. Holden. An attempt to override the veto was unsuccessful.

Despite Gov. Holden's veto, I believe this is crucial legislation and will be of great assistance to the small businesses of Missouri.

A thriving small business community is crucial to Southwest Missouri's economy, and we should do everything possible to help them succeed.

In fact, small business is a driving force behind our state's economic recovery. Data released by the Small Business Administration shows that in 2000, 49.6 percent of workers in Missouri were employed by businesses with fewer than 500 workers. Between 2001 and 2002, new companies with employees increased by nearly 16 percent to 16,337.

Nearly 41 percent of self-employed workers in Missouri in 2001 were women. There were 103,600 women-owned businesses in the state, which generated \$15 billion in revenue.

After a final Senate vote, this bill will be sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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